

Hiring At Risk: Time to Ensure Hiring Really Is the Most Important Thing We Do

This manuscript has been peer-reviewed, accepted, and endorsed by the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) as a significant contribution to the scholarship and practice of school administration and K-12 education.



Dr. Thomas Ross Hughes
Northern Arizona University

This article focuses on the necessity of providing foundational preparatory training for those who are charged with leading teacher hiring efforts at the K-12 level. The essential question proposed within the article is: Why are the very educators tasked with directly leading K-12 staff selection and retention efforts far more likely to be schooled in how to avoid liability and how to dismiss employees, than receive formal and meaningful preparatory, let alone ongoing, training on the most important act of hiring the highest quality employees in the first place? Though there was a paucity of information on the practice of hiring early on, the professional literature has long acknowledged the importance of teacher selection for both instructional and organizational success, and has recently focused more on the act of hiring itself. Increased focus on this topic reveals very little attention directed toward training, though it demonstrates a need for greater consistency that would be fostered by training administrators at the graduate level, and continuing to address this topic by means of ongoing professional development throughout their careers. Increased scholarship on this topic both domestically and internationally supports the need for training, and provides valuable knowledge and resources that would benefit all K-12 administrators who play any role in this most important area.

Introduction

Hiring new teaching staff is repeatedly said to be the most important thing any K-12 school administrator does. As this statement is widely touted in American educational circles, and even supported by research (Fitzgerald, 2009; Hindman & Strong, 2009; Winter, 1995), few probably question it, let alone contemplate why this might not be accepted as *the truth* based on what is known about actual practice. Realistically, to actually pose such a question would be about as improbable as starting a conversation focused on what educators have been doing lately to improve the consistency and quality of selection efforts in this *most important* area. Fifteen years ago, underlying questions like these prompted a study examining potential barriers to beneficial refinements and establishing new priorities in K-12 hiring practices within Midwest America. That the barriers discovered fifteen years ago continue to exist, and the needs have only grown in scope and magnitude, suggests that this is a topic worthy of the fervent attention of all who are serious about truly doing what it takes to improve schools, regardless of whether the setting being considered is domestic or international.

The Nation at Risk Era

Fifteen years ago, the professional literature in the United States indicated hiring was important because of widely anticipated teacher shortages, and due to a general need to meet established teacher licensing expectations (Hughes, 2000). Multiple sources (DuFour, 1997; Fullan, 1997; Sears, Marshall & Otis-Wilborn, 1994) also pointed to the importance of hiring as they identified the potential impact careful selection could have on improving an educational system resulting from the significant contributions teachers were making in the area of school improvement. Despite some emerging awareness connecting hiring with potential school improvement efforts, Hughes (2000) found little if any evidence to suggest hiring practices were being reviewed or systemically updated at all, let alone starting to focus on identifying *change friendly* teaching candidates. In addition, the most glaring concern that appeared and continues to this very day is the lack of consistent and preparatory training for professionals who will be responsible for critical teacher hiring decisions.

Of eight potential barriers that were examined for their limiting impact on improved hiring efforts (Hughes, 2000), what stood out the most was an over emphasis on traditional selection methods, and what could be termed an *overwhelming* lack of training for hiring teams, particularly for those responsible for leading them. Whereas updating selection practices and providing training is an expectation in many professions, educators were found to be far too comfortable with doing things the way they had always been done. Most practices originated and have not been updated since a time long ago when expectations placed on schools and the professionals within them were very different. A lot has changed even during the past fifteen years. Most all of the challenges facing K-12 education have only intensified exponentially since the days when *A Nation At Risk*, coming from President Reagan's National Commission on Excellence in Education, was the overwhelming concern and was driving efforts to improve American schools from the mid 1980s to the turn of the century. Still, sadly it appears that educators continue to be too comfortable doing things the way they have always been done, though some of these continued practices may result in their spending a considerable amount of time, effort and money rectifying decisions they have put into play.

The Great Recession

Fast-forwarding fifteen years, to today, concerns about replacing baby-boom generation teaching staff continue (Heidenreich, 2008), and The National Center for Education Statistics forecasted an inability to replace roughly half of the anticipated 2 million new teachers needed by the year 2010 (Satin, 2005). O'Donovan (2011) and later Gardener (2012) acknowledged there is a known shortage, but point to the greater needs in the areas of math, science and special education, while also noting that inner-city and rural locations typically have ongoing difficulties recruiting and retaining for the majority of their open positions. To complicate matters and only heighten demand in many areas, and likely broaden this issue beyond America's shores, the recent international financial downturn has resulted in layoffs and additional uncertainties that often see teachers choosing not to return to education because of general dissatisfaction with the profession and diminishing financial support for teaching resources and competitive salaries (O'Donovan, 2011).

With increasing financial and accountability stresses, and decreasing public regard for the profession in America, Gardner (2012) questioned why anyone would seek to enter a career path that is now regularly being vilified where it once was celebrated. For reasons like these, it is reported by Darling-Hammond and Beery (2006) and Gardner (2012) that one in three teachers is likely to leave the profession in the next five years. While higher education has been able to keep up with peaks in demand in the past, universities too, have been impacted by the unstable economy, and according to O'Donovan (2011) may not be able to meet the National Center for Education Statistics continuing projected needs for peak student enrollments at least through 2018. With all of this anticipated and ongoing activity involving bringing in new teaching staff, there is ample discussion about teacher training and recruiting as well as induction and retention efforts. While there is some increased attention in terms of hiring practices, there is little indication of any priority when it comes to providing any meaningful foundational preparatory training to those who are making the *most important* decisions administrators make.

The NCLB Era

In January of 2002, President Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 into law. This update of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act from 1965 sought to significantly raise expectations in areas including core academic content, accountability, funding and teacher qualifications for American schools (Ellis, 2007). Many agree No Child Left Behind succeeded in articulating numerous concerns within the United States, including those surrounding perceived deficits in teacher quality. Further, it received acclaim for doing so in a way that helped reduce overreliance on emergency certifications, and put new heat on efforts to raise training standards, along with efforts toward recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers (Darling-Hammond & Beery, 2006). Enthusiastically noting that such significant needs and resulting positive steps to raise teacher standards will necessitate an intense long-term national effort, these same authors and Kingston (2007) also pointed critically to the ways in which the US Department of Education has given states both the authority and sadly even the encouragement create alternate paths to teacher certification. Disturbingly, these very exceptions could ultimately help eliminate the very training requirements NCLB identified as being in such critical need of strengthening and improvement. When Gardner (2012) observed "It can take schools as many as 11 hires to find just one irreplaceable teacher" (p.1), he was referring to a process that was looking at highly trained and fully qualified teachers. Ironically, with all the acclaim directed toward NCLB's addressing teacher quality, administrators will likely have to adjust those numbers upward, the more states move toward a system wherein multiple-choice

tests with almost no attention to teaching skills are used to *qualify* nontraditional candidates for crucial positions (Darling-Hammond & Beery, 2006).

The National Challenge

Due to widely anticipated long-term funding deficits, increased mandates, a diminishing level of professional respect, changing demographics and working conditions, in addition to a profession facing ongoing changes in instructional technology and delivery around the world, there is little reason to expect an end to the disturbing national flight of both new and veteran teachers any time soon. This exodus and questions over who will attempt to successfully fill these important shoes is particularly concerning to many. As Kingston (2007) commented, the National Association of Secondary School Principals' objected to the minimizing of highly qualified teacher standards, and political moves that ran counter to doing everything possible to ensure all students had truly qualified teachers. Facing this trend, and the daunting prospect of having an increasingly untrained yet somehow 'highly qualified' classified pool of candidates to select from, will undoubtedly present the national educational systems with yet another dire challenge, as schools attempt to keep up with the rest of the world and find the remaining best and brightest to fill their classrooms and help to shape the cultures of our schools.

Though circumstances may seem even direr than they did fifteen years ago, there was sufficient reason even then to initiate efforts aimed at improving the methods and prioritization of qualities used for selecting teachers, and to involve administrators in training on these concepts early in their professional development. Hughes (2000) found there was little interest in addressing this challenge in Mid-America, and likely was just as little interest or capacity within administrator training programs to even invest in preparing school leaders to do a better job in this widely held *most important* area. Fast-forwarding back to today, it seems likely NCLB's broadly celebrated and highly publicized call for increased teacher quality, and the actual sadly ironic resulting abandonment of investment in that very same level of quality, not only stands to set the United States behind international counterparts, but also seems to demand that teacher selection processes and priorities finally receive some long-deserved attention at the initial training level.

Increased Scholarly Attention on Hiring

During the days of A Nation At Risk, there appeared to be a paucity of professional educational literature on the topic of teacher selection practices, as Hughes (2000) observed that much of the information being drawn upon had to come from the professional fields of business management and organizational psychology. In recent years, Hindman and Strong (2009) acknowledged an alarming lack of investigation into hiring practices, and Clement, Kistner and Moran (2005) pointed to the irony of a profession so heavily tied to assessment neglecting to use effective and appropriate assessment practices in teacher selection efforts. Still, there appears to be reason for optimism, at least in comparison to the paucity of the past. Today, there is more attention being devoted to this topic, within the profession; and the focus of the research and the literature appears to be gaining momentum in terms of diversity as well. Clement (2009) has written widely on hiring practices, ranging from the use of structured interviewing approaches, to the emerging role technology is playing (Clement, 2006). There are growing numbers of dissertations focusing on this topic, and emerging awareness within the literature as a whole that teachers make a vital impact on the success of their educational organization (Alger, 2012; Heidenreich, 2008; Hindman & Strong, 2009). Recognizing the strong connection to school improvement efforts that Hughes (2000) drew attention to, Reeves (2007) has gotten involved

with the topic of hiring high quality teachers as part of his overall school improvement practice. In identifying three potentially innovative strategies utilizing classroom observation, questions about data analysis and analysis of student work in an interview, Reeves not only contributes to the research, but speaks more so to the even greater value in continuing the effort to promote improved practice in this highly important process.

Growing Insights Into Hiring

With attention to hiring practices already starting to gain important momentum, despite its continued generally perceived lack of importance, there would be every reason to expect significant continued growth were the topic to finally receive the foundational training emphasis it deserves. Added insight and early training would certainly appear to be important based on what the current research is saying. According to Lyng (2009) principals admitted to being largely self-taught or trained by a mentor, and described hiring practices that were heavily influenced by political and individual preferences. Clement (2009) concurred with these findings, and described individually developed interview styles that can actually be based on how administrators were originally hired years earlier. Sclair (2000) examined the perceptions of personnel administrators and principals, and found no significant difference between them, which would seem to suggest that regardless of whomever is viewed as really being responsible for hiring, there is considerable and unquestionable need for professional growth. Despite an increase in available literature on improved practices, Popwell (2009) observed 9 out of 10 research participants admittedly did not have the type of structured process recommended by research.

While the literature going back even fifteen years, including Hughes (2000), suggests that careful hiring provides a critical opportunity to improve the organization, Lyng (2009) indicated the troubling finding that *such opportunity* is apparently lost on the people making the decisions, as they tend to be satisfied with the status quo, and even look to match hires with, and essentially maintain their current culture when they decide on staff. Based, it would seem, on a lack of preparatory training, and a tendency to work in isolation, Lyng (2009) went on to present a strong argument that these educational leaders don't even seem to realize the shortcomings of their actions. With no one setting a professional standard to work towards, or professional training to draw upon, administrators are often left to their own devices, or at best can infrequently draw on largely for-profit training, assuming they are even so inclined and it is available to them. Based on what the current literature is revealing, it would certainly seem to be time to make sure every school across the nation is prepared to handle this *most important* responsibility of hiring top quality candidates, just as they respond to other critical aspects of their mission and overall operation.

Undeniable Need For Increased Expertise

Acknowledging that little has changed in terms of the perceived importance of hiring, and supporting these efforts with preparatory training, it may help to consider a few *bottom lines* that have been brought forward in the literature. According to Clement (2009) poor hiring practices can affect student learning, school or district success, and can actually damage a school's culture. Heidenreich (2008) cited anticipated turnover when advocating those involved in the function of selecting teachers to develop a more strategic understanding of their craft. In addressing Nebraska's glaring deficits in teacher preparedness, Alger (2012) made it abundantly clear that the staff makes the difference in an excellent system, and was critical of the approach American schools took to bringing high quality teachers, particularly in comparison to approaches taken in

other countries. Fitzgerald (2008) found that schools with ample pools of candidates to draw upon may have an advantage and a bit of a cushion, but went on to predict that an overall lack of structure and hiring inconsistencies could be expected to create problems that ultimately will take time away from other vital functions.

This potential drain on school resources was echoed by Hindman and Strong (2009), who offered that positive selection practices, can be expected, instead, to result in added capacity that might otherwise be lacking in a faculty. Fitzgerald (2008) put it well by noting hiring has the potential to positively and relatively quickly impact student achievement, employee satisfaction and overall organizational success. As if the local organizational argument doesn't say it effectively enough, Alger (2012) presented a variety of statistics in a more business-like manner when suggesting a \$41 trillion gain in the U.S. Gross Domestic Product could be realized in coming years by improving practices, at least to a point where at least two percent of the ineffective teachers were replaced. Adding to that *economic argument*, she went on to report findings, supported by Schleicher (2011) that the overall costs of hiring and retaining ineffective teachers, and how they perpetuate achievement gaps, creates an economic drain that amounts to being a "permanent national recession" (p.4). As Hindman and Strong (2009) concluded, there is far too much at stake not to make a far greater effort to train administrators in more updated and more effective teacher selection methods.

The Call For Preparatory Training

Increasingly, a glaring argument can be made to support the need for training future administrators to hire top quality staff members. Both reason and research coming from investigators like Fitzgerald (2008) are starting to call directly for course work on teacher selection at the preparatory level for administrators support it. That said, the only question that really remains is: What is it going to take to realize the tremendous opportunity to make a difference in the quality of American schools, or even those elsewhere, by teaching administrators how to hire at the time when they are learning the rest of their craft? NCLB placed a lot of new expectations on schools, and directly upon administrators, including new professional evaluation criteria. The demands and the stakes are only increasing, and would seem to dictate that schools hire and retain only the best candidates. Still, it doesn't appear as though any required coursework on hiring was included in the mix of recent national legislation and resulting reform. Realistically, a change like this probably wouldn't be as effective as desired if it were merely legislated by bodies outside of the profession. Nor would such legislation likely be positively embraced anyhow. Instead, it would appear that much of the impetus and support for change like this needs to come from and enjoy support from within the profession in order to have a chance at succeeding and contributing as it needs to student learning outcomes.

ISLLC 2008/2011

Recognizing the need to improve general practice from within the profession, the Council of Chief State School Officers, a cohort of Department of Education leaders from individual states, embarked on an effort to collaboratively articulate and promote professional standards and target objectives that could help spur and support improved preparation and professional practice for prospective school leaders. The end result of that effort was the creation of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) and a set of national standards in the mid 1990s. This first set of national standards for American educational leaders was almost immediately embraced by professional leadership organizations in 24 states by 1996, and was ratified by and

additional 22 states for a total of 46 states by 2005 (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2013). As the council continues to revise and improve their efforts, it researched and updated its Educational Leadership Policy Standards in the publication of ISLLC 2008, and revised them again as recently as 2011.

Moving from general need to establishing the more specific focus of the ISLLC, the Council of Chief State School Officers (2008) addressed increasing domestic challenges, and detailed the very important work of instructional leaders, including the very responsibility of *hiring teachers*. Though it is encouraging to see the acknowledgement of hiring decisions in the body of this statement that describes the critical work of building level administrators, it would certainly have meant much more to actually see the same wording directly embedded in the 2008 Standards as well. As the CCSSO document appropriately identifies, ISLLC standards help set the expectations for licensure and administrator preparation programs at colleges and universities. While the specific *hiring* terminology doesn't seem to appear in the wording of the standards, there are a two standards and functions within the revised document and shown in Table 1.1, that appear to be worth examining.

Table 1.1 Relevant Elements to Standards 2 and 3

ISLLC 2008 Standard 2

Developing a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth...

F. Develop the instructional and leadership capacity of staff.

ISLLC 2008 Standard 3

Ensuring effective management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment...

B. Obtain, allocate, align, and efficiently utilize human, fiscal, and technological resources.

Though in theory hiring could potentially be contained within either or both of these standards and function statements, and acknowledging that the ISLLC with the support of the CCSSO went to great lengths not to be too prescriptive in this most recent revision where it might have been more specific (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008), it is difficult to conceptualize how this current wording would directly lead to the improvements education legitimately needs in this area of selecting stellar classroom leaders and educators. Though hiring is mentioned repeatedly in recent literature, even within the very titles of important documents like the Platte Institute Policy Study completed by Alger (2012), an attentive reader tends to realize that the process or act of *hiring* itself is not even a point that is directly addressed in a majority of these documents.

Tempting, as it may be, to poll the architects of ISLLC 2008 to learn of their disposition toward the importance of hiring, it wouldn't change anything at this point, and there is already feedback from Spanneut, Tobin and Ayers (2012) illustrating how the updated ILLSC 2008/2011 priorities are being taken in the field. In their study to support the very important work of the

National Association of Secondary School Principals, Spanneut, Tobin and Ayers (2012) surveyed administrative professionals at all three elementary, middle and secondary building levels to identify the actual ISLLC 2008 priorities of professionals in the field. Of the three groups, only the secondary level administrators included a priority that might even remotely be considered to be close to addressing hiring practices. They did so by ranking Standard 2, Function number 11, which focuses non-specifically on developing the instructional and leadership capacity of staff, as the number nine and final item in their list of most important priorities in the field. Results like these would agree with the literature to suggest that while there is growing demonstrated need for and literature that supports training to hire teachers, it apparently is not a high enough priority in the field of American education any more than it is within training programs across the nation.

International Ramifications

To this point, it has been difficult to garner necessary and sufficient attention for this area of need and opportunity within the local, state or national arenas as they are already so preoccupied with barriers identified by Hughes (2000) and different priorities intended to help turn around the American Educational system, and restore it to its former level of international acclaim. As Schleicher (2011) points out, the international leadership role the United States played following the conclusion of World War II continues to erode, and the new standard of comparison for highest performing systems and best practices is now considered to be found in the international arena. As Schleicher (2011) went on to relate, educators in the United States and those responsible for the future of the very institution itself need to be cognizant of the achievement gap that is already growing between the United States and some of the genuinely high performing nations of the world. As that gap continues or even increases, it is expected to result in economic losses greater than the overall financial drop-offs experienced during the recent Great Recession. As a result of it's own tendencies, a nation that was once used to leading the way will have to catch up, continue to learn to truly innovate again, and play catch up to have any hope of keeping the high paying jobs that historically formed the core of the nation's middle class.

Learning From The Best Of The Rest

Admittedly, it is an American tendency to look for the quick fix that addresses the immediately troubling symptoms, instead of looking for and investing in the deeper long-term systemic solution. In building on this point, and making an argument for expanding the focus of best practices to include international efforts, Stewart (2013) shares how consistently preparation efforts for building level leaders have been questioned, scrutinized and deemed as being ineffective in the long standing literature on the topic. As Vice President for the *Asia Society*, an educational organization devoted to building stronger connections and partnerships between the United States and other global leaders, particularly those in Asia, Vivian Stewart and others like her are leading the way in efforts to broaden the focus of school improvement to include contributions from international successes. Noting the critical impact the nation's educational system makes on the economy, Kagan and Stewart (2004) along with Stewart (2013) and Zachariou, Kadji-Beltran and Manoli (2013) establish cause for expanding the search for solutions to the concerns that are troubling American schools. Instead of viewing international efforts as a threat or even as being unimportant, educational leaders need to take a cue from the Council of Chief State School Officers who's representatives collaborated with representatives from the ASIA Society (Kagan and Stewart, 2011) to call for increased

partnership aimed at identifying and utilizing best practices in an effort to improve education around the world.

Summary And Recommendations

There is an abundance of literature as noted in this paper, and very visible daily evidence that documents the ongoing struggle of American schools to meet the expanding expectations placed upon them by the growing needs of their students and the communities they serve. Though mandates like NCLB may be unique to America, many of the concerns that challenge American schools are not so unique to learning institutions around the world. Though some may consider it merely to be a quaint expression, there is support both in the literature and within practice to validate the statement that *hiring teachers truly is the most important thing administrators do*. This is because of the irreplaceable role teachers hold within the very school systems they serve; and the statement is only gaining in validity due to increasing concerns about potential shortages, and trends where teachers across the nation are rapidly leaving the profession.

There is also growing insight within the profession concerning best practices in hiring that is finally coming from within the profession. Along with a focus on selection practices, the literature is clearly showing that American building level school administrators regularly lack the requisite background and training in hiring practices to even be able to appreciate the need for, or the availability of improved teacher selection strategies and approaches. Sadly, as is supported in commentary by Hindman and Strong (2009), the current *in the field* focus for training administrators continues to largely ignore best practices for improved teacher selection, and instead largely focuses on imparting practitioners with increasing apprehension over the possibility of being sued. The *play it safe mentality*, and legal advice that is being presented in the field, does little to encourage administrators to try or do anything differently than was done before, which only strengthens the need for early training and research supporting it. Unfortunately, as a result of this focus, the orientation on *what not to do* continues to take clear precedence over even considering that there could be, and actually already is a better way to do things.

With the demonstrated need to improve the entry-level knowledge of administrators, and the growing availability of resources to help shape the effective preparation of administration candidates to not only do a better job from the very start, but also contribute to the understanding of future best practices, it is time to go beyond the initial phases of research, to expand the focus, and to include international efforts and successes as well. It is not only clearly time, but it is imperative and it is critically recommended that those who have any opportunity to lead the way in initiating a change in the continued failure to address this need immediately begin to remedy the situation. Specifically, it is recommended that:

- Future updates of ISLLC 2008/2011 and leading work done both domestically and internationally continue to promote the idea, understanding and adoption of distributed leadership practices as these so clearly link with the critical school improvement concepts and opportunities detailed in this paper.
- More specifically, all above mentioned parties need to move beyond celebrating the singular image of a leader, and encourage increased awareness and practice where *leadership is* transformational and engages teachers and other team members in sustainable collaborative and shared leadership of the organization.
- Anyone invested in sustainable school improvement, particularly in American schools, needs to focus beyond *reactionary quick fixes* that are aimed at appeasing legislative mandate manufacturers. They need instead to focus at least as much on and promote a

continuous improvement mentality that best capitalizes on distributed leadership efforts and is more consistent with recommendations from international sources such as Bush (2012) who identify and support the need for initial preparation and ongoing leadership development throughout the career of an administrator.

- Researchers, associations like CCSSO, and training institutions alike must make greater note of the efforts now starting to take place in larger urban school districts that are taking responsibility for training their administrators on the very topic discussed here, because training to this point has widely been found to be entirely lacking.
- Training programs that specialize in preparing educational leaders, and provide courses in personnel and staff supervision, have every reason and the clear responsibility to lead the way in developing initial and ongoing professional development in this critical area. If they do not step up and do so, with today's changing marketplace, they need to realize someone else will.
- Specifically it is recommended that these institutions first review their instructional rubrics in personnel, supervision and in capstone courses. If their programs do not offer any instruction beyond common topics like payroll responsibilities, or the increased emphasis on mandated supervisory practices that are being dictated by accountability efforts, they need to update their offerings to begin to include specific instruction on the topic of hiring practices. Further, they would do well to encourage scholarship and research in this area as well, so that they might increase their own capacity and chances for success, and further contribute to the overall success of the profession.
- Finally, future updates of ISLLC 2008/2011, and leading work done both domestically and internationally need, to directly call into question why schools do not have the capacity to do a better job in the area of hiring, and either establish or help to establish standards that ultimately and directly address this shortcoming at preparatory levels and continuing development areas.

Conclusion

Education in the United States, and for that matter around the world, is facing challenges that have never been faced before. These challenges are not going to go away, but can only be expected to increase in significance and complexity, and present themselves even more rapidly than has ever previously been experienced or likely even imagined. It is time to accept that *ready or not*, the very field of education is changing by leaps and bounds, and calls for more modern and adaptive leadership models like distributed leadership. In addition to demanding practices that are better able to capitalize on the critical contributions of the teachers and others who really make schools successful, much more needs to be done to support the success of these efforts.

If educational leaders are truly going to have the best teams to work with, then improvements in teacher training and genuine efforts to provide incentives, induction and ongoing support to attract and retain the best teachers are of absolute necessity. These efforts are necessary, but not enough. For too long, hiring has been carried out in isolation, through outdated practices, with the potential improvement of practice perhaps even being written off with a catch phrase that gives lip service to supporting the very importance of hiring the best, but doesn't appear to relate in any way to actual efforts to bring this tremendous *most important* responsibility about. Talking about the importance of hiring the best needs to give way to investment in developing the skills and attitudes and training it takes to making this statement a

reality in more than a few places that have stepped out on their own after realizing the necessity of these very changes.

Many of the answers on how to improve our schools, beginning with the very first step of teacher selection practices are already out there, and many more are already on the way. It is more than time to make a priority out of training educational leaders to do as good of a job with hiring as we expect them to do with anything else. It is more than time to expect and support this by establishing preparatory expectations in this area, and providing both initial and ongoing training that supports best practice and helps to spur further innovation as well. In starting this paper with one commonly heard phrase, about the importance of hiring the best, it is perhaps only fitting to conclude with the line of thought from another commonly heard expression. To continue as we have, to conduct business the way it has always been done, and to yet somehow expect different results is... beneath the dignity, the importance, the ability and international responsibility of this vital and very *sane* profession.

References

- Alger, V. E. (2012). *Teacher selection and evaluation in Nebraska*. Omaha, NE. Platte Institute of Policy Study.
- Bush, T. (2012). International perspectives on leadership development: Making a difference. *Professional Development in Education* 38(4), 663-678.
- Clement, M. C. (2009). Hiring highly qualified teachers begins with quality interviews. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 91(2), 22-24.
- Clement, M. C., Kistner, W. & Moran, W. (2005). A question of experience. *Principal Leadership*, 5(9), 58-62.
- Clement, M. C. (2006). Technology and hiring. *American School Board Journal*, 193(7), 24-26.
- Council of Chief State School Officers. (2008). *Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008 As Adopted by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration*. Washington, DC. Council of Chief State School Officers.
- Council of Chief State School Officers. (2013). *Standards for Educational Leaders: An Analysis*. Washington, DC. Council of Chief State School Officers.
- Darling-Hammond, L. & Beery, B. (2006). Highly qualified teachers for all. *Educational Leadership*, 64(3), 14-20.
- DuFour, R. (1997, Spring). Functioning as learning communities enables schools to focus on student achievement. *Journal of Staff Development*, 18(2), 56-57.
- Ellis, C. (2007). No child left behind: A critical analysis. *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue*, 9(1/2), 221-233.
- Fitzgerald, J. (2009). *Teacher hiring practices: A study of the teacher hiring process used by Indiana public school principals*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations. UMI Number: 3398477.
- Fullan, M. (1997). Emotion and hope: Constructive concepts for complex times. In Hargeaves, A. (E d.), *1997 ASCD year book: Rethinking educational change with heart and mind*. (pp. 216-233). Alexandria, VA: ASCD Yearbook.
- Gardner, W. (2012, October 12). The Truth About the Teacher Shortage – Walt Gardner’s Reality Check. [Web Log Post]. Retrieved from http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/walt_gardners_reality_check/2012/10/the_truth_about_the_teacher_shortage.html
- Heidenreich, W. (2008). *Teacher hiring practices in long island school districts: Perspectives from practicing long island public school personnel administrators*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations. UMI Number: 3327037
- Hindman, J., & Strong, J. (2009). The \$2 million decision: Teacher selection and principals’ interviewing practices. *ERS Spectrum*, 27(3), 1-10.
- Hughes (2000). *Barriers to hiring change-friendly staff: Perceptions of Wisconsin public school administrators*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations. UMI Number: 9996861
- Kagan, S., Stewart, V. (2004). Putting the world into world-class education. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 86(3), 195-196.
- Kingston, M. (2007, September 18). NASSP Executive Director Dr. Gerald N. Tirozzi Responds to Highly Qualified Teacher Lawsuit. [Web Log Post]. Retrieved from <http://nasspblogs.org/principalspolicy/2007/09/nassp-executive-director-dr-gerald-n-tirozzi-responds-to-highly-qualified-teacher-lawsuit/>
- Lyng, Steven J. (2009). *Hiring certified teachers: A qualitative study of the experience and practice of high school principals in a Midwestern state*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations. UMI Number: 3403123
- Mueller, H. (1993). Group activity interviews: an important step in selecting new

- teachers. *NASSP Bulletin*, 77(555), 111-13.
- O'Donovan (2011). Is there a teacher shortage on the horizon? *District Administration*, 47(3), 74-76.
- Popwell, D. (2009). *Qualitative analysis of hiring practices used by principals*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations. UMI Number: 3374132
- Reeves, D. (2007). New ways to hire educators. *Educational Leadership*, 64(3), 83.
- Satin, L. (2005). *Recruiting and retaining teachers*. Lexington, KY. The Council of State Governments.
- Schleicher, A. (2011). Is the sky the limit to education improvement? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 93(2), 58-63.
- Sclair, J. (2000). *Selection tools for hiring of teachers: Personnel administrators' and principals' perceptions*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations. UMI Number 9973395
- Sears, J., Marshall, D. & Otis-Wilborn, A. (1994). *When best doesn't equal good: Educational reform and teacher recruitment: A longitudinal study*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Spanneut, G., Tobin, J., & Ayers, S. (2012). Identifying the professional development needs of public school principals based on the interstate school leader licensure consortium standards. *NASSP Bulletin*, 96(1), 67-88.
- Stewart, V. (2013). School leadership around the world. *Educational Leadership*, 70(7), 48-54.
- Winter, P. (1995). Facts and fiction about teacher selection: Insights from current research findings. *The High School Journal*, 79(1), 21-24.
- Zachariou, A., Kadji-Beltran, C., & Manoli, C. (2013, November). School principals' professional development in the framework of sustainable schools in Cyprus: A matter of refocusing. *Professional Development in Education* 39(5), 712-731.